

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 27, 2017
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
HDP-2017-0602
1102 BLUEBONNET LANE

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1953 house.

ARCHITECTURE

One-story, irregular-plan, sloped flat-roofed stuccoed frame and stone house with fixed-sash and casement steel-sash windows. The house was designed by local builder A.D. Stenger, who is known for his mid-century modern houses in Austin. The house has also undergone several renovations and additions, including one in 2004 that apparently took the house down to the studs, resulting in the current appearance.

RESEARCH

The house was built by local designer and builder A.D. Stenger in 1953 for William and Sylvia Lester, who lived here at least through the 1990s. William Lester was a native of Graham, Texas, who moved to Dallas at a young age and studied at the Dallas Art Institute. He became one of the “Dallas Nine,” a group of young artists in Dallas who focused on developing a Texas regionalist style of painting. After gaining renown throughout the country with exhibitions at no less than the New York World’s Fair in 1939, Lester moved to Austin in 1942 to begin teaching art at the University of Texas. He served as chair of the Art Department in the early 1950s, and was made full professor in 1956. Throughout his tenure at the University of Texas, he continued to paint and exhibit his art, at prestigious museums and galleries throughout the country. In the later part of his career, he limited his art showings to Texas, and he retired from the University of Texas in 1972.

STAFF COMMENTS

The house is beyond the bounds of any city survey to date.

1102 Bluebonnet Lane does not appear to meet the criteria for designation as a historic landmark.

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

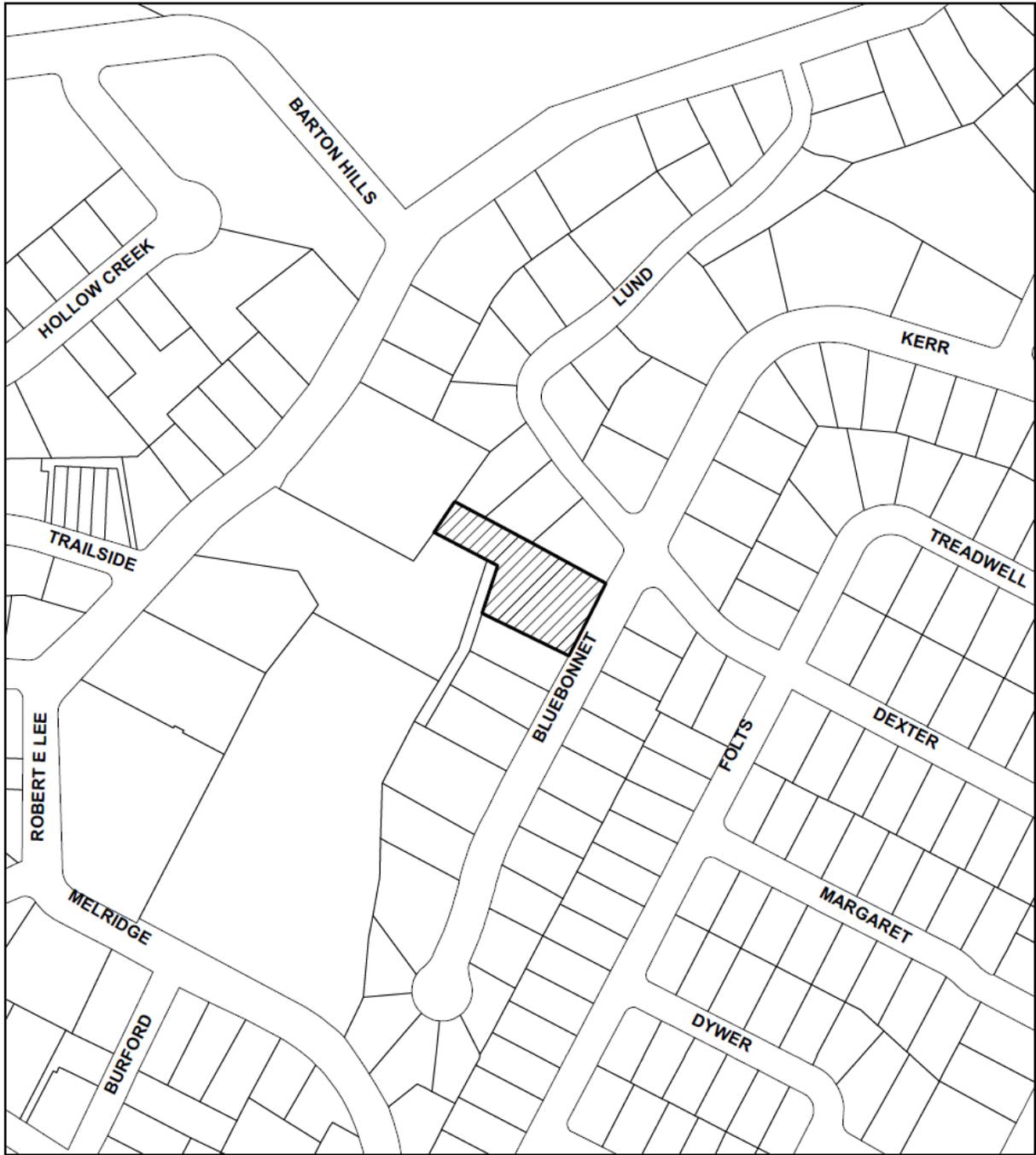
- 1) The building is more than 50 years old, having been constructed ca. 1953.
- 2) The building does not retain historic integrity. It retains a high degree of integrity of location and setting and a moderate degree of integrity of design. However, multiple renovations and additions have caused the house to lose its integrity of materials and craftsmanship, as well as the associated integrity of association and feeling.
- 3) Properties must meet two historic designation criteria for landmark designation (City of Austin Land Development Code (Section 25-2-352). The property appears to demonstrate significance according to two of the criteria.
 - a. **Architecture.** The house retains its form as an example of mid-century modern design executed by local builder A.D. Stenger. However, the exterior materials and window configurations on the house have changed dramatically since the time of construction, resulting in a loss of integrity for the house.

- b. **Historical association.** The house was the home of William Lester, a nationally renowned artist and art professor at the University of Texas, who lived here from the time the house was built until his death in 1991.
- c. **Archaeology.** The house was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.
- d. **Community value.** The house does not possess a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, the neighborhood, or a particular demographic group.
- e. **Landscape feature.** The property is not a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, but release the permit upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package consisting of photographs of all elevations, a dimensioned sketch plan, and a narrative history, for archiving at the Austin History Center. While the house appears to retain its form as a mid-century modern building designed by A.D. Stenger, it has suffered a significant loss of integrity with new exterior wall materials and windows that compromise its original appearance. The changes to the house after William and Sylvia Lester's occupancy have resulted in a house that does not reflect their tenure there.

LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2017-0602
1102 BLUEBONNET LANE



1" = 208'

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by CTM for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

1102 Bluebonnet Lane
ca. 1953



OCCUPANCY HISTORY 1102 Bluebonnet Lane

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
November 2017

1985-86	William L .and Sylvia B. Lester, owners Retired
1977	William L. and Sylvia B. Lester, owners Retired
1968	William L .and Sylvia B. Lester, owners Professor, University of Texas
1962	William L. and Sylvia B. Lester, owners Professor, University of Texas
1959	William L. and Sylvia B. Lester, owners Professor, University of Texas
1955	William L and Sylvia Lester, owners William: Associate professor, University of Texas

Sylvia: Office secretary, Social Welfare Association

1954 William L. Lester, owner
Associate professor, University of Texas
NOTE: Sylvia Lester is not listed in the directory.

1953 The address is not listed in the directory.
NOTE: William L. and Sylvia Lester are listed at 1339 Bonham Terrace; he was an associate professor at the University of Texas.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

William L. and Sylvia Lester (ca. 1953 – ca. 1991)

William L. Lester was born in Graham, Texas in 1910. He moved to Dallas with his family in 1924. After high school, he studied at the Dallas Art Institute and associated with other young artists, who became known as the Dallas Nine, a group that developed a Texas Regionalist style. He was one of the founders of the Lone Star Printmakers, who created lithographic prints.

In the 1930s, he worked as a staff artist with the Civilian Conservation Corps in Palo Duro Canyon and at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Before moving to Austin in 1942, he taught at the school of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts. His painting style progressed from the Texas Regionalism of the Dallas Nine in the 1930s, particularly landscapes and portrayals of everyday life in the southwest, to being influenced by the bright colors of contemporary Mexican artists in the 1950s, to abstract works in the 1960s.

William Lester began working for the University of Texas in 1942, serving as chair of the Art Department from 1952 to 1954, and as full professor of art in 1956, before retiring in 1972. He first gained national attention as one of the exhibitors at the Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas in 1936. In that same year, his work was shown at the First National Exhibition of American Art at the Rockefeller Center in New York City. His paintings were also shown at other expositions and museums around the country, including the New York World's Fair Exhibition (1939). He had showings at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, the Brooklyn Museum, the Fine Arts Society of San Diego, and the Denver Art Museum in the 1940s, and at the Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting in San Francisco and the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center in the 1950s. His work is represented in the permanent collections of many leading art museums and other collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Whitney Museum in New York City, the Dallas Museum of Art, and Witte Museum in San Antonio, and the Huntington Art Museum at the University of Texas at Austin.



Dallas Museum Buys William Lester Art

The Dallas Museum of Fine Arts has purchased for its permanent collection a watercolor by William Lester, Austin painter, and University of Texas art faculty member. The acquisition was made along with nine or 10 other paintings and sculpture of Texas artists, through the Lide Hooe Memorial fund.

Lester also recently won first prize in the exhibition of the Texas Fine Arts association at Laguna Gloria, with his oil, "Edge of Town." Alexander Masley, another art faculty member, won third prize with his oil "The Posse."

News article on William Lester's art in the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts
Austin American, May 20, 1945

Works of Austin Artist Lester Again Selected for Solo Show

For the third time in five years, the works of William Lester, University of Texas art professor, has been singled out for a solo show at the Passedoit Gallery of New York.

The Lester show drew considerable praise from New York critics who termed his work "highly sensitive" and "firmly representational."

Some of the excerpts indicate the tone of the exhibit:

"There is little brio to Lester's solid handling of paint, but his subject matter, change and decay all around is romantic. Roofless houses, uprooted trees, sunless beaches — assertive forms all of them, and color is juicy," said the New York Times.

The Herald-Tribune noted that Lester's landscapes "are highly sensitive studies of tree-shadowed houses, rocks and plains, done with brushwork that is extremely free, color that is all sensitive nuance and a total effect, for all this subtlety, that is firmly representational."

Said the Art Digest: "A personal conception of subject matter is marked in all the paintings, but the more recent ones evidence greater concentration and subduing of detail to the scheme of the designs. Employing a recognizable objective basis for his landscapes, Lester abstracts essentials in formalized expressions of power and amplitude."

The UT artist-professor was further honored by having two of his works from this show selected for display in important national exhibits. His "Near Terlingua" has been invited to the Corcoran Exhibition in Washington, D. C., and "Dark Precipice" has been picked for the Denver Annual in Denver, Colo.

Lester has exhibited nationally for several years, and his work is owned by some of the nation's leading museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Article publicizing William Lester's solo show at the Passedoit Gallery in New York
Austin American, March 29, 1953

Exhibition Of Lester Works Set

An exhibition of paintings by William Lester, one of Texas' foremost artists, will open the fall season for the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs art gallery.

The one-man show will be unveiled Sunday at 3 p.m. with an open house at which the public will have an opportunity to meet this prominent artist.

This new exhibition is Lester's first local one-man display since 1951, although he has recently exhibited in New York, San Francisco, Washington, Dallas and San Antonio.

Last month he was honored with a one-man showing in Lubbock sponsored by the Panhandle-South Plains Fair.

As a member of the University of Texas art faculty since 1942, Lester has turned out a notable supply of work which found its way into some of the nation's leading galleries and exhibitions.

He is represented as well in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of New York, the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York, the Dallas and Houston Museums of Fine Arts and the Witte Museum of San Antonio and also has a sample of his work in the American Embassy in Paris.

The quality of his work has consistently earned him numerous prizes and awards, his last major honor being the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts' purchase prize in last year's Texas Annual show.

His current exhibition at the TFWC Building, located at 2310 San Gabriel Street, is composed of 30 paintings covering a period of 10 years.

The show will remain on view through Nov. 7 with visiting hours daily from 2 to 5 p.m.

Article on William Lester's exhibition at the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs art gallery
Austin American, October 6, 1957

Paintings by Lester Hang at Headliners

A collection of 18 paintings by William Lester, prominent painter on The University of Texas art faculty, has gone on view in the Headliners Club gallery for a month-long exhibition.

Lester, a member of the UT faculty since 1942, has been one of its most widely exhibited painters.

He has had one-man shows at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, the Passedoft Gallery in New York, the Dayton (Ohio) Art Institute, the Corpus Christi Centennial Museum, the San Antonio Art Center and the University of Oklahoma as well as numerous other solo exhibits in Austin and around the Southwest.

Lester's work has also been featured in such leading general exhibitions as the annual Texas

General, where he has been represented yearly since 1936, the 1956 Gulf-Caribbean show, the Virginia Biennial, the Corcoran Biennial and the annual Pennsylvania Academy show.

In addition, his paintings have been displayed at the 1936 Texas Centennial, the 1937 Pan-American Exposition, the New York World's Fair and the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco as well as in such galleries as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum, the National Academy and San Francisco's Palace of Legion of Honor.

Among the collections including his work are the Metropolitan Museum, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Dallas and Houston Museums of Fine Art, the Witte Memorial Museum in San Antonio and the American Embassy in Paris plus many private collections.

For his painting, Lester has won numerous prizes and awards — three from the Texas Annual, three from the Texas Fine Arts Association and individual awards from various other competitive shows in which he has participated.

Article detailing William Lester's gallery exhibition at Headliner's
Austin American, November 19, 1961

Lester's Work Reflects Design, Composition of Nature

By MARGARET TAYLOR
DRY
Art Writer

William Lester, of the University of Texas art department, will open a one-man exhibition at the Laguna Gloria Art Museum Wednesday to run through Feb. 11, as part of the Texas Fine Arts Association's special circuit of his paintings showing throughout Texas.

This exhibition of his work is coming here from where it has been showing in Longview, after showing in and will continue on the circuit going from here to Temple followed by exhibits at Lufkin, Corpus Christi, Houston and Beaumont before ending June 31.

Lester, a native of Graham, has been with the UT art department for 28 years and was chairman of the department from 1952 to 1954. He also taught at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts from 1940 to 1942 and at Sul Ross State College during the summers of 1949 and 1950.

When Life magazine ran a series of editions of that magazine showing paintings under the heading of "Director's Choice" in 1955, Jerry Bywaters, then director of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, chose Lester's painting of an old fort in the Big Bend Country of Texas as the one to represent his area.

This was a distinctive honor for Lester and the accompanying article by Bywaters about the artist and his unique technique leaves nothing to be doubted as to his ability as a painter of decided merit, to say nothing of the many awards he has won with his excellent work. Among these are the Purchase Award Dallas Allied Arts, 1940; Purchase Award Texas Print Annual, 1941; Marquis D'Oyley Purchase Prize, 1945; Purchase Award, Corpus Christi, 1946; Humble Oil Award, TFAA, 1949; Dallas Museum Award, Texas General, 1949 and 1951; Texas Annual, 1953; Mrs. Herman Brown Award, 1951; Julian

Onderdonk Memorial Prize, 1952; Gulf-Caribbean 1956; Dallas Museum Purchase Award, 1956.

He has conducted one-man shows in many significant art centers, museums, and colleges throughout the country in such places as the Dayton Ohio Art Institute, Passedoit Gallery, New York, and Oklahoma University, and has been represented in many exhibitions including the Texas Centennial, New York World's Fair, Golden Gate Exposition, Denver Museum, Virginia Biennial, University of Nebraska, Whitney Museum, Palace of the Legion of Honor, and others.

Lester's works are included in the collections of the American Embassy in Paris, Metropolitan Museum, Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Centennial Museum, Corpus Christi, Witte Memorial Museum, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

Lester says of his work that he fell in love with the world as a young man, its sunshine, its clouds, the entire panorama of the earth which interests him in all its phases. He decided early in life that he wanted to make art his career and went to live in the hills of Arkansas, becoming almost a hermit, for two years to get away from the cities and find his own particular style of expression uninfluenced by others and uninterrupted in his study of the elements and the natural beauty of the earth he loves.

He feels strongly that an organization of effective design is to be found in every aspect of life and that its composition and development of color is the visual medium which must portray this image to the viewer in its own immediate structure. In his paintings he emphasizes strong structural patterns with a technique which is abstract but with recognizable subject matter drawn chiefly from his visual conception and unique

interpretation of life and the elements of nature.

He says the greatest thing that has happened to him during his career of devotion to art was his appointment to the art department of the university in 1942 where he averages some 60 students in his classes and finds involvement with young people, and guiding them in the field of art, a very rewarding experience.

The exhibition at Laguna Gloria will be made up of not only the 30 paintings from this circuit which has been touring Texas and which includes the works of the past 15 years, but will have some of his later paintings added from his

studio here.

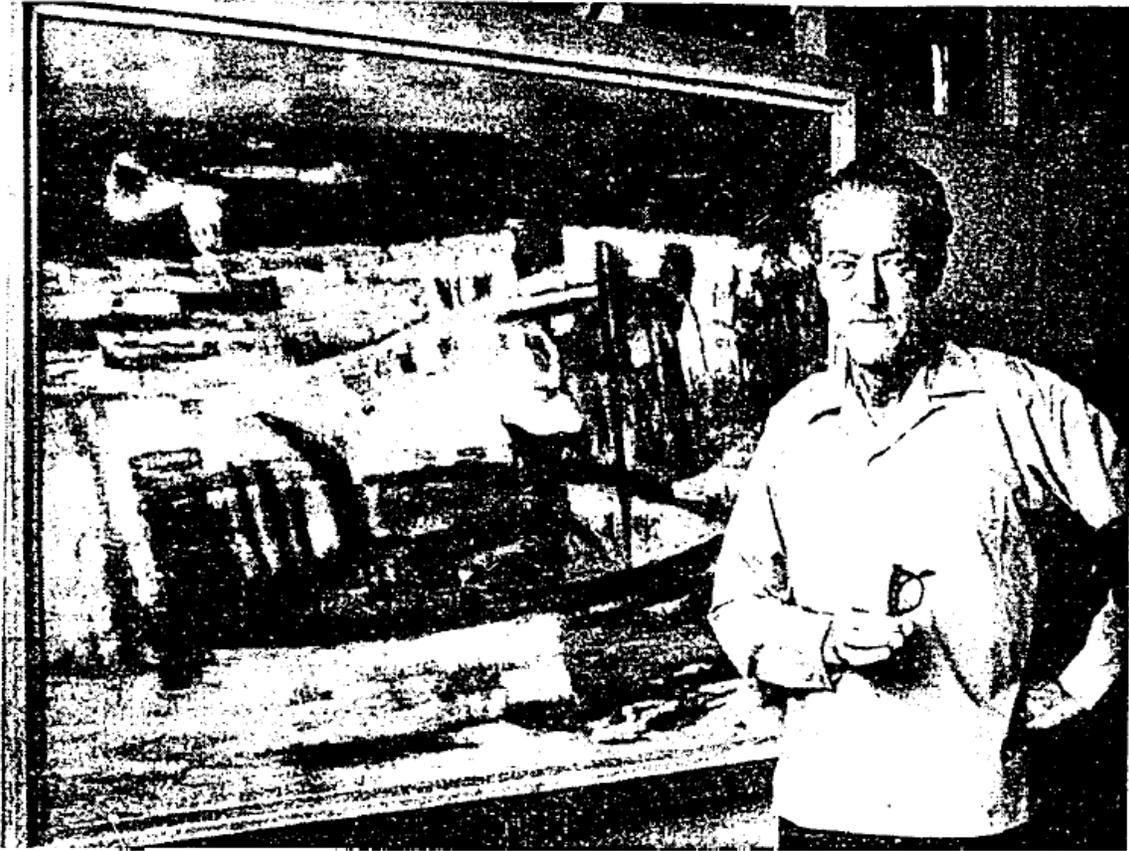
I went out to view these paintings and was immediately attracted to a large canvas entitled "Imprint" which is magnificently done using a dry brush method of applying oils which, viewed from different angles, assumes the textural quality resembling rich velvet. It is the interpretation of the Gulf Coast of Texas with the impression of a ship far out at sea with a larger ship in the foreground. A great deal of white used strikingly with shades of blue indicating the sky and the water is used throughout the painting.

"Distant City," which will also be shown, is an acrylic using shades of vermillion with darker color indicating clumps of trees and in the distance a medieval city in white nestles strikingly against the horizon. Both of these paintings show a mastery of technique and an imagination in bringing forth in an abstract manner subject matter which would be quite ordinary done in a more conventional recognizable form.

This is an exhibition which art lovers will not want to miss. The comments which have come in to Mrs. Halton of the Texas Fine Arts Association here regarding its acceptance over the circuit have been glowing with praise. Francis M. Witherspoon, Chairman of the art department of Kilgore College, wrote, "The exhibition is one of the most exciting we have ever had." Christine B. Glass, Consultant, Library Services, El Paso Public Schools wrote, "The show is tremendous. We are delighted to have the opportunity to exhibit it -- we are quite enthusiastic about it. I know the show will be enjoyed by all who view it."

There will be a reception for Lester at the Laguna Gloria Art Museum on Sunday, Feb. 1 from 3-5 p.m. to which the public is invited.

Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tuesday through Friday;
Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.;
Closed Monday. There is no admission charge.



ARTIST WILLIAM LESTER WITH PAINTING OF TEXAS GULF COAST ENTITLED "IMPRINT"
 . . . the large canvas is an example of the drybrush method of applying oils.

Story on William Lester's art opening at Laguna Gloria
 Austin Statesman, January 25, 1970

William Lester died in Austin in 1991.

Wm. Lester	1102 Bluebonnet Lane
74 Map	8 and 9 F - -
South Lund Park	
Stone veneer and frame residence with carport attached.	
52805 12-23-52	\$17,500.00
A. D. Stenger	

Building permit to William Lester for the construction of this house (1952). A.D. Stenger is listed as the builder.

Rep. 5-27-53
 849 SW II

WATER SERVICE PERMIT

Austin, Texas

D No. 8401

INDEXED

Received of A. D. STENGER Date 6-8-53

Address 1102 BLUE BONNET

Amount THIRTY AND NO/100 \$30.00

Plumber MIDDLETON PLBG CO Size of Tap 1"

Date of Connection 6-8-53

Size of Tap Made _____

Size Service Made _____

Size Main Tapped _____

From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 7.5'

From N-Prop. Line to Curb Cock 34'

Location of Meter CURB

Type of Box LOW

Depth of Main in St. _____

Depth of Service Line _____

From Curb Cock to Tap on Main _____

Checked by Engr. Dept. 7-7-53 RBZ

No. Fittings	1	Size	
Curb Cock	5/8"		
Elbow			
St. Elbow			
Bushing	1/4 x 3/4"		
Reducer			
Pipe			
Lead Comp.			
Nipples			
Union			
Plug			
Tee			
Stop			
Box			
Lid			
Valves			
Job No.	323-507		
Req. No.			

Water service permit to A.D. Stenger for this address (1953)

SANITARY SEWER SERVICE PERMIT

No. 31657

Austin, Texas

SW II

Received of MIDDLETON PLRG. Date 6-5-53

Address 1102 BLUEBONNET LN.

Amount _____ \$ _____

Builder or Owner A. D. STENGER Plumber _____

Lot 849 Block _____ Subdivision So. LUND PARK Plat No. _____

Date of Connection	<u>6-18-53</u>
By City	<u>64' N/5LL</u>
By Plumber	
Checked By	<u>HERNANDEZ</u>
Size Main	<u>8"</u> Depth _____
Main Assign.	<u>IN EASEMENT @ REAR</u>
Stub Depth	_____ Prop. Line _____
Stub Location	_____
Book No.	<u>A-2977</u>
Paving Cut	_____ No. _____

No. Fittings	15	Size	6" CONC.	Price	3.30
Pipe					
Hyes					
Bends					
Reducers					
Plugs					
Sand					
Gravel					
Remix					
Stoppers					
Castings					
Other					
L.H.R. TRUCK					.50
Labor: 18 HRS.					18.00
L.H.R.					1.50
					23.30

Sewer service permit referencing A.D. Stenger as the builder of this house (1953)

City permit records show the addition of a living room, pantry, utility room, covered patio, and remodeling project in 2004, a total interior gut and remodeling in 2011, and the addition of a deck in 2011.